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JANUARY/FEBRUARY ISSUE

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Photo by Rob Havens '88

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Howdy Ags!

What an exciting time in Aggeland! After football's regular season wrapped up, Scott Woodward went out and made the best hire imaginable for Texas A&M. There are only four active coaches that have won National Championships in Division 1 football and one of them is now the coach of Texas A&M. Inside you can read Coach Jimbo Fisher's initial remarks as he was welcomed with open arms to A&M at his introductory celebration that took place in the Hall of Champions inside of Kyle Field.

Coach Fisher brings a championship vision to Texas A&M. Expectations are high but as the coach said, nobody's expectations are higher than his own. Texas A&M has the best stadium, the alumni have donated to upgrade our facilities to attract the best recruits, and now the administration has given their support to bring in the best coach.

Inside this issue, I hope you enjoy getting to know Coach Fisher and the amazing football coaching staff he has assembled. The eyes of the nation are once again focused on Texas A&M to see what the new staff and our players can do in the seasons ahead.

Coach Fisher is without a doubt the best coach we could have brought to Aggeland. I am anxious to watch him work and look forward to the championships he will bring to A&M.

Since the last issue, the Aggies have also hired a new volleyball coach. We would also like to welcome Coach Laura "Bird" Kuhn to Aggeland! Inside you will find a Q&A with the new coach as she took questions at her first presser.

Softball and baseball are just around the corner and the rest of our spring sports are in full gear. We want to wish all of our coaches and players good luck and we hope to be seeing lots of championships in the months ahead!

Spring football will be here before we know it and Coach Fisher is already looking for the 12th Man to break the attendance record at the Maroon & White game at the end of spring ball. Let's all make plans to be there to get this new era of Aggie Football off to a great start!

For real-time updates on all things Aggie sports, be sure to follow us on Instagram (@aggelandillustrated) and Twitter (@aggiemag).

Thanks & Gig'em Ags!

Rob '88



Aggieland

ILLUSTRATED

PUBLISHER/EDITOR

Rob Havens '88
rob@aggiemag.com

979.229.8046 or 1.866.55.AG.MAG

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Sarah Pyatt '14

COPY EDITOR

Chelsea O'Neal '17

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Sarah Pyatt '14

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Jerry Anderson

979-764-0015

2214 Texas Ave. South
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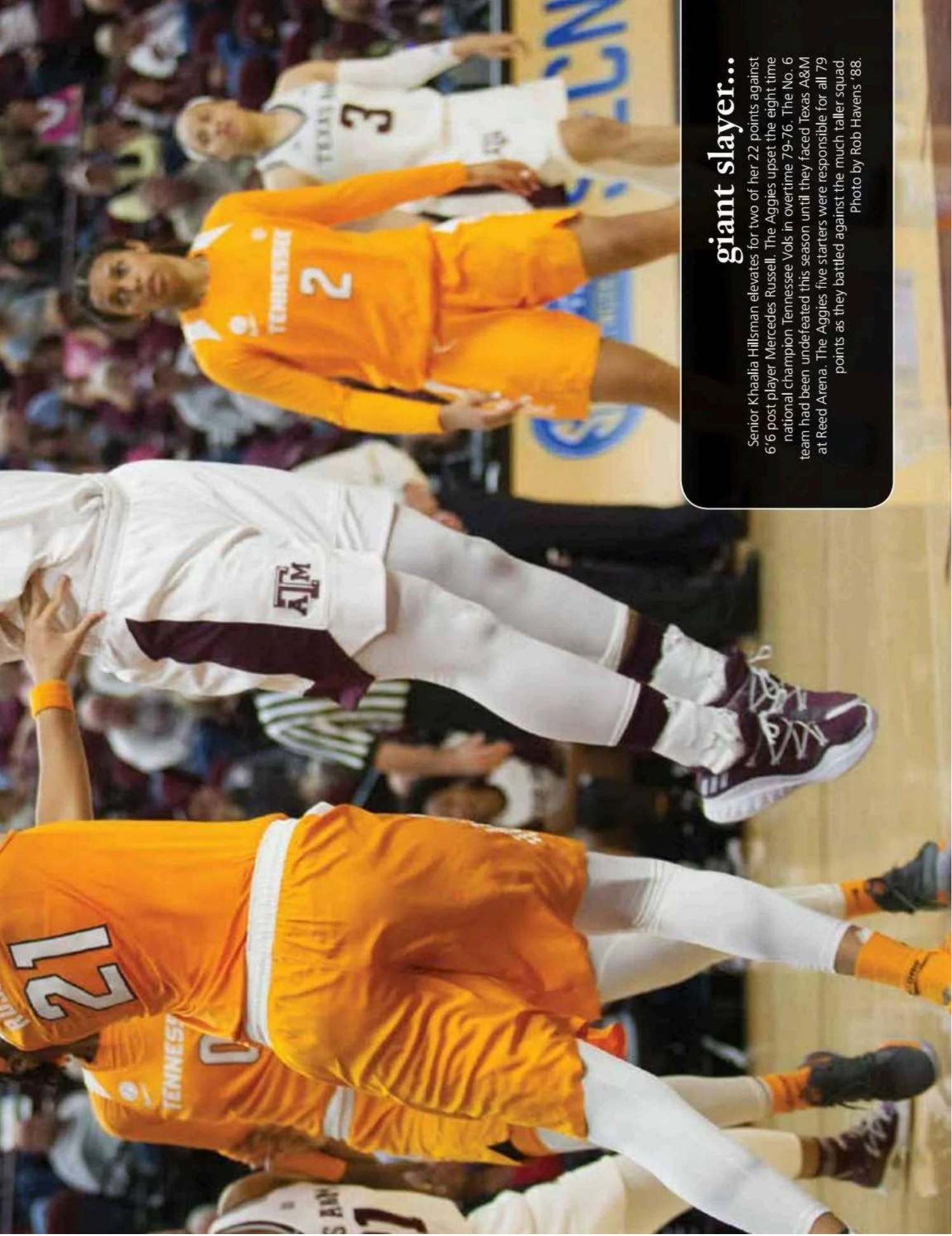
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giant slayer...

Senior Khaalia Hillsman elevates for two of her 22 points against 6'6 post player Mercedes Russell. The Aggies upset the eight time national champion Tennessee Vols in overtime 79-76. The No. 6 team had been undefeated this season until they faced Texas A&M at Reed Arena. The Aggies five starters were responsible for all 79 points as they battled against the much taller squad.

Photo by Rob Havens '88.

snapshot





final ride...

Keith Ford races around the edge for one of his 17 rushes against the Demon Deacons in the Belk Bowl. The talented senior led the team in rushing touchdowns this season. He leaves Texas A&M with over 1,200 career rushing yards during the two years he played for the Aggies. Ford averaged 4.6 yards a carry at A&M with 18 touchdowns.

Photo by Rob Havens '88.

snapshot





t.d. ...

Tyler Davis dunks, letting out his trademark barbaric yell as he finishes. The talented junior has transformed himself since leaving high school losing 100 pounds and making himself into one of the best players in the country. He leads the team in scoring and rebounding and has been the model of consistency for the program. The sky is the limit for this guy and we are proud to have him suit up for Texas A&M.

Photo by Rob Havens '88.



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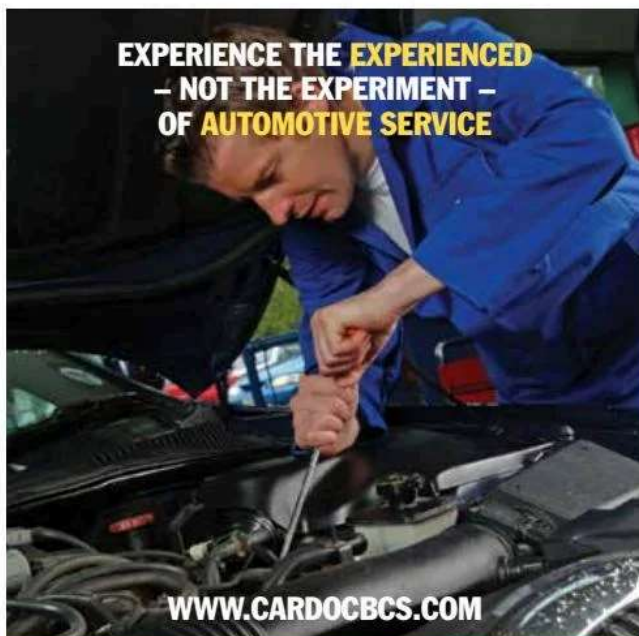
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scoreboard



[women's tennis] The team got off to a great start by sweeping their first two opponents, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley and Prairie View A&M, on opening day. Returning players Domenica Gonzalez, Macarena Olivares and Eva Paalma picked up where they left off last season by leading the Aggies to straight set wins. A&M's three active freshmen, Riley McQuaid, Dorthea Faa-Hviding and Iulia Ivascu, were all victorious in their career debuts winning straight sets as well.

[men's basketball] Billy Kennedy has what many people believe is the most talented and deepest men's team the Aggies have ever had. Exceeding expectations, the team rolled through the nonconference portion of their schedule and ascended to the No. 5 ranking in the country. But injuries and suspensions derailed the squad and the team started the SEC portion of their schedule 0-5. The team now has their work cut out for them if they want to make the tourney.





[women's basketball] Texas A&M has started out this season with a 14-5 overall record, with highs and lows along the way. They beat an undefeated No. 6 Tennessee team in overtime and showed they have the ability to compete but unfortunately fell short against the defending national champion South Carolina on a last second basket in Columbia. Freshmen sensation Chennedy Carter has been a difference maker and received national accolades after scoring 46 points in a win over USC. Danni Williams, Khaalia Hillsman, Anriel Howard and Jasmine Lumpkin round out a starting five that have their eyes set on a conference championship.

[track & field] In the first collegiate home meet of 2018 both the men's and women's teams collected titles. The women's team, who is currently ranked No. 10 in the country, dominated the field and bested second place to Clemson by 100 points. The No. 17 men's team produced 172.5 points, more than doubling up the next best school, Army, that finished with 83 points. Coach Henry credited the successful meet to the hard work the teams put in last fall and said this was a good first rehearsal for the big play coming up in about two months.



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Q&A WITH

BIRD

How did you get your nickname?

"You guys can call me Bird. My real name is obviously Laura Kuhn, but a lot of people don't really know my full name. My dad named me. Ever since I was little, I was born bird legs. No calf muscles. Obviously, I work out now, so they're there, but bird legs my whole life. So, it kind of stuck."

Why was this the job that you chose over other offers?

"There are certain things that I was looking for when I finally decided to make the next move, and I think it was kind of surprising to the staff at Kansas and the people around me because there were future plans that I was probably going to stay there. When this job opportunity came up, it was the foundation. There were certain things and certain expectations and standards and goals for myself in my career and what I think for the certain programs that I interviewed at that were attainable. It just became obvious when I was down here. It was in my gut, the first job that I was like, 'I want that job.' And just coming down here and meeting the people and seeing everything, the

support that we will have through and through, it was a no-brainer to me."

What was your feeling stepping on campus for the first time?

"It was crazy because it was a week's span of time, and I went on three different interviews. So, where as I am like 100 percent extroverted, it was fun for me, and I was meeting people. I think you feel that in athletics, so there always an energy. But that 's what was cool here. You connect with certain people. You meet people. You connect with them. That is inevitably what you are going to build your decision on. Fortunately for me, I had those opportunities, and it was a very fast thing, and I wanted it to be that way. I didn't want to drag it out. I wanted to make the decision for the team, for the players, for my future staff. It wasn't something I wanted to drag out at all. I put a timeline on myself actually."

"But you just feel it. You feel it when you are here. You feel the tradition. You feel the people that I know that have been a part of the program here and just the athletics here. There are people at Kansas that have been here before, so

that made it more exciting, even when I had left the interview."

Coming into a program that hasn't seen a new head coach in 25 years, how do you feel stepping into that?

"Me being a relationship person, I always think about the Corbellis, because inevitably in our volleyball community, it's pretty small. It's nationwide, but it is a small community. We all know each other even if we are not super close, so I've always respected them. But to me, that's exciting. It was the same thing when Dave Shoji retired at Hawaii. A lot of people didn't want to follow in the footsteps. People kind of steer away from that. To me, and even with that I was like, 'That's a foundation.' It doesn't matter the ups and downs, whatever might have happened. That is a foundation that has been laid here, and that is to me a very positive thing. They know that I respect them, and I appreciate this opportunity because I get to work with something that has already been established. So, to me, that was a huge positive."

What were the keys to Kansas' turnaround?

"I think it was culture. I loved working for Coach B (Ray Bechard). He was great, and we learned a lot from each other. I give him props for allowing just the training changes that occurred and us working together and developing those things, because it was the culture. And it wasn't like we ever cleaned house. We trained the kids that were there, and we built the culture and then we recruited. So, it was a natural transition and they are great people, amazing kids, amazing recruits just like I'm sure we have here, just a couple of conversations I've had on the phone with them. So, I foresee the same transition. You are going to establish the culture and your style of play mixed with that relationship and the dynamics that you are going to build as a staff. With everyone. Not just the volleyball staff. I'm talking strength and conditioning, athletic training, academic advisers, everyone that is hands on with our program. It is going to be a special connection that our kids will feel."

Scott Woodward, on the search and why was Bird the choice:

"First of all, kind of as a preface, I

have such an incredible staff. This was very much a group effort led by Lori (Williams), and as you well know, Stephanie Rempe played volleyball in college, and the best comment came from my CFO, Jeff Toole. The first day she was on campus, he said, 'Don't let her get out of here without hiring her.' I said, 'Calm down, Jeff. We have time.' But this is how we do things. We have expertise in doing it, and there was unanimity in that. Lori was sold. Obviously, Jeff was sold, and Stephanie was. We had this kind of consensus that was. And then I met her one-on-one, and I was sold. You just want to make sure you are thorough and that you go through this process and that you think about it and that you do it right, and that you see what is available. Everything that she talked about aligned with everything that we are about -- giving our kids the first-rate education that they can get and that being important, because that is going to carry on the rest of their lives; and secondly, being able to compete at the highest level and not being afraid of it, and that is what she is about. I've been around championship volleyball and watched a national championship at my former employer, and I know it and I know what good volleyball is about, and she reeked of that; and then thirdly, she talks about it more of relationships. I talk about it more as the experience and what our kids are about and who we are as Aggies. You know that. You've heard me say it a million times, 'It's imbedded in our core values and who we are.'

Do you see this program as a sleeping giant that you can build and win SEC championships?

"Yes, I do, and that's in every sport we do. Frankly, I just think as a conference, like softball, we have to get better in volleyball. We watched it happen, and Bird and I talked about it. I'm not worried about the rest of the conference, but usually when you have better competition in your conference, it helps everyone. So, I think that is going to happen, and I think it is going to transcend. But we have a great advantage here being such a good university with such a great amount of talent and ability in the Texas area that we can be very good, and that is our vision for what we are. But we do in my opinion have to get better as a conference in this sport."

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NEW ERA

Jimbo Fisher Brings Championship Vision to A&M

It is truly a great honor and privilege to standing in front of you in Aggieland today. It really is. I've always admired Texas A&M from afar and appreciated what it had. I'm extremely grateful to be here at Texas A&M. And this is, without a doubt, one of college football's greatest sports venues and richest traditions. Within the short amount of time that I've been here, all that said, the people here are incredible. I don't know if I've been around a nicer group of people who are more professional and make you feel more welcome. It feels like I've been here for two years already. It's really has been incredible, the amount of support and the people, the way we've been treated and our family. It's remarkable.

But before I continue, I'd like to say a special thank you to the players, coaches, and supporters at Florida State University. And a special thank you to Coach Bowden. He gave me an opportunity 11 years ago to come there and then gave me an opportunity to be a head football coach. And back then, President T.K. Wetherell, the board of trustees and Jim Smith gave me the opportunity of my life to live a dream and continue a dream, allowed me to come here to Aggieland.

Like I said, a special thanks to those two young men and President Thrasher and A.D. Stan Wilcox for all the help and support they gave me during the time at Florida State to be very successful. Beyond success on the field, there are

important relationships you develop off the field and in those communities. And I'll always be grateful and thankful the way you treated our family and our time at Florida State. And I wish y'all nothing but the best.

But I want to say a special thank you to Scott Woodward. As I say, with Scott, as we met back in the year 2000, that, you know, we went to LSU at that time. And there was a commitment to excellence and there was a vision for what we wanted to do. And Scott was one of those guys that always said if I ever had the opportunity to work with him again -- because I say this all the time in coaching: You can have Vince Lombardi, Tom Landry, Chuck Noll, you can have the greatest coaches in the world; but, if your administration doesn't see things in the way you see things and allow you to do things that way, nothing can be achieved. There's a oneness to everything you do to be successful. And I knew he had the same visions that I did. Just like Scott said, he felt that about me. I felt that about him back with Chancellor Emmert at that time, who is now the president of our NCAA. And they allowed us to do the things in which we had to do to be successful. And that's always attracted me to him, and I thank him. And other than that, being a great friend. We did some great things at LSU, and we can do it again.

Also a special thank you to Deputy A.D. Stephanie

Rempe, president Young, Chancellor Sharp, Chairman Schwartz, the 12th Man Foundation for giving me this opportunity. It's truly a great opportunity.

We understand that we are the front porch of this university. We are not this university. We are just a representation of this university. But we are the front porch of this university, and we want to represent it with the great values and core values on the field and off the field that this school represents. And then, let people realize the greatness that's going beyond the field really continues. And the secret to it is here in College Station, of what this university is, what it represents, what it is and what it still can be as we grow.

And success leaves clues. It really does in your life. All the successful people, I've learned from every one I've been around. Success leaves clues and the common denominators. And I'm a true believer in this: Success doesn't happen by accident. And you either live in vision or you live in circumstance. We want to live in vision. And we want to grow and develop and do the things here in which we think are comprehensive to this university and represent this university and to our student-athletes. Because, at the end of the day, it's all about the players. It's about the student-athletes and the students in this school. Because without them, none of us on this panel would have a job. It is truly about the people. And I can represent that, hopefully, very well.

And what we want to do here is create a comprehensive plan for success for our student-athletes. But first, as a student. Students and their activities as people is going to affect their lives, the education they get here more than anything in their life. There's no doubt. And the education here, and the people here, I understand the success of Aggieland as I've been here, as I researched it and studied it.

Next is a person. And I believe this: If you develop the person, everything else falls in place, that comprehensive plan of creating habits and making decisions and doing things. And our players, I want them to understand the two more important abilities. I want them to leave our organization with accountability and dependability. If you're accountable and dependable and you develop the right habits as a person, everything else in your life will fall in place.

The education will. Because, if you're accountable and dependable, you're going to go to class; you're going to go to study hall; you're going to do the extra things in which you have to do. If you're dependable and somebody calls your name and is standing up that needs you, those are two of the most important qualities in life. Because I say, education is very important. But when you're a good person, everything else falls in line and you create those habits daily that create you.

And then third is an athlete. As an athlete, you know, that's what we're here for. But often that's the carrot we will dangle to develop these kids in every facet of their life. We all want to play ball. I love coaching ball. I love all the things that go with it. But if we don't have good people, if we don't have people that are educated and driven to excellence in every form of their life, what translates off the field is going to be the same thing that translates on the field.

And that's what I want you to see in our players. I want you to be proud, when you sit in those stands, of how they compete, how they play, how they look at things, and how they represent Texas A&M University because, as I say, we are the front porch. There's going to be 15 to 20, 25 million people watching games. And we want them to understand what we're about here in College Station and what we can do and what the people can encompass and come here and want to see more about our university.

I have learned a heck of a lot here in about a day and a half. It's been amazing the things that I've -- I had no idea about. I thought I researched it, but I wasn't close. It wasn't close. And those are a lot of things that drew me here.

And then fourth after that is helping launch their career when you're done. Because when these players leave this university, we want them to be



tremendous ambassadors for our school so they come back and they want to say -- and when we're out on the recruiting trail and they say, "What is it like to be there? What is it like to play there?" And they ask us. I'm going to say go ask our ex-players. Go ask the people who were here, see what it's like.

Making sure they're successful in their life, whether it's in pro football or whatever it may be, if they're lucky enough to be able to be one of the few fortunate guys that develop at that level, that's great. But taking care of these in a comprehensive way that produces ambassadors for our university, helping keeping it grow and be the place it is and the special place that y'all know it is.

Because this creates culture. And, in my belief, culture is the most important thing that any university can have, any program can have, any organization can have. Because it's the way you walk, it's the way you talk, it's the way you think.

And being here, I don't have to tell

y'all that. There's no doubt. I mean, it is everything in which I envision and more. The amount of pride in which I see people in this school, when they told me when I got here, they said it's going to be different. You know, I say that. You hear that everywhere. You really do. You hear those statements everywhere you go. I feel it, though. I really do. And I see it.

And there's an adage that I tell our players about your actions speak so loud I can't hear what you're saying. Because we hear it all the time. "I'm going to do this, Coach." "I'm going to do that, Coach." But your actions speak so loud I can't hear what you're saying. Well, your actions speak so loud I can't hear what anybody else is saying. It's truly great.

You know, our program will be built on four principles which I talk about all the time: Toughness, effort, discipline, and pride. There's a mental and physical toughness that goes with everything. Toughness is the number one thing in this world. And there's a great book out right now, as a matter of fact. In a little bit of that toughness comes in the word called "grit."

If you're mentally tough and you're physically tough, you have a word called "grit", which the most successful people in this world have that grit. They have the ability to dig down and pull out from within themselves to do the things they have to do. They have to give effort, effort in every phase of their life. It takes effort to be a good person. It takes effort to be a good student. It takes effort to be a good player, all of those qualities. And that can never be compromised. It can never be compromised. The discipline to be able to do what you're supposed to do when you're supposed to do it, the way it's supposed to be done every single time in every facet of your life.

And then the pride, the Aggie pride here, I feel it. There's pride in what you do and who you are and what you do as a person. And at the end of the day, sometimes that's the things that have to drive you. On those hot days, long days, the days that, you know, we all go through as human beings, whether you're a coach, whether you're a player, whether you're a father, whether you're a child, whether you're a student, whatever it may be, there's got to be a pride of excellence in what you do. And

that's the kind of people we want to bring to Texas A&M. They exhibit these qualities.

Because, like I say, there's talented people everywhere in this world. But people who are driven, who are focused through our belief and want to be part of a team -- "TEAM" is Together Everyone Achieves More. That's what we have to understand. We have to be one. We have to have a oneness.

And we all do want to win. The individualism, especially in today's world, is very driven, the individualism to be great. There is an I in TEAM -- excuse me. There's no "I" in "TEAM," but there is an "I" in "WIN." And we tell our players every day, that's going to be the individual responsibility for you to be the best you can be for Texas A&M University so our team can be great. And we each have that responsibility, as a coach, as a player, as everybody who touches and effects these kids' life.

That's what we want to do, a comprehensive program. Because, as we develop kids today, this is going to be a comprehensive program. The mission for us here is very clear: Develop these young men to be the best they can be in every facet of their life. Because when they're champions off, they're going to be champions on.

And I understand that I come in here with great expectation. And I say this due diligence, your expectations will never be greater than mine. I promise you that. We understand expectation. We live in a world of expectation. That's what we do. But our expectancy and habits of ourselves to be great will never exceed anything that's out there. We're going to be driven to be the best every day. When good enough becomes good enough, we have a problem. Good enough can never become good enough. There's always room for growth every day.

We're going to strive for excellence and perfection every day. Every day. And never relinquish that. As Vince Lombardi once said about that, we're going to strive for perfection every day knowing full and well we'll never reach it. But in the meantime, we're going to find that excellence, who we are and what we are. We have to drive to that every day.

As you play in this league -- I grew up in this league. I coached 13 years in this league. I understand this league. I was



six years at Auburn. I was seven years at LSU. I achieved national champions in this league, conference championships in this league. It's one of the best conferences in all of college football. It's one of the best divisions in all of college football. We understand everything that goes with it. That's the challenges I like. That's what I want to be.

I want to take Texas A&M to somewhere they haven't been, and that's the champion of the SEC. That's where we want to be and what we want to be and advance to the national championship and how we do it. If you can compete in this league, you can compete in any league in college football. We have all the ingredients.

People say what attracted you to Texas A&M? First and foremost, it was Scott Woodward. As he told me in his vision for the place and what he had and he told me the President's vision and the Chancellor's and the Board of Regents', it was a no-brainer. And to be able to come over here and accept those challenges and go to new heights and do things -- because breaking into this conference and doing the things we have to do. And I think all the ingredients are. I really do. I think we have tremendous recruiting base. I think we have tremendous facilities, and I think we have tremendous support. I'm looking forward to the challenge of accepting that challenge and moving this organization and program forward and helping this university, be a proud part of this university.

I understand respect, excellence, leadership, loyalty, and integrity, and selfless service are the six core values of Texas A&M. Our program will reflect these. Our players will reflect these. Our staff will reflect these. I will reflect these.

I always tell our players this: Change is inevitable; growth is optional. We want to grow. We want to live in vision. I think, when you live in vision, if you can't see it, you can never achieve it. I can see what we can be. I have a vision of what we can be. We will chip away and take the things away that don't help that vision. We will increase the things that help that vision and try to take Texas A&M where it should be at the top of the college football world. I think everything is here. It's an exciting time to be at Texas A&M, and I'm extremely proud to be your coach. Thank you.





NEW COACHING STAFF

For years, Texas A&M Football has been called a "Sleeping Giant" by experts in the sports world. The program has some of the best facilities in the country. It lies in arguably the biggest hotbed of football talent in the nation, deep in the heart of Texas. The 12th Man has been called the greatest fan base in all of sports and the athletic department has the money to do what ever it needs to do.

The only thing missing has been the coach to put A&M at the top. The person with the quest to make that happen, was athletic director Scott Woodward. Once it became evident that Coach Sumlin wasn't going to be able to accomplish the task, it became Woodward's prime responsibility to fill that role.

There are only four active head coaches that have led their team to a national championship. For college football fans they can identify them by just hearing their first name, Nick, Dabo, Urban and Jimbo.

Woodward said, "When we set out to find a new leader of our proud football program, we set our sights high. Jimbo is among the best football coaches in America and a perfect fit for A&M."

Having met and worked with Jimbo Fisher some 20 years ago at LSU, Scott had built a relationship with him and when it came time to fill the position he already knew who his top choice was.

Fisher's response to the idea of coming to Aggieland was, "There are very few places in America that I would have left

Florida State for, and Texas A&M is at the top... We have everything in place to reach our goal, which is to bring a national title to College Station, and I can't wait to get started."

Texas A&M was prepared to invest whatever it took to secure the best coach available. As Chancellor John Sharp explained, "Gone are the days when we settle for a good football team. We expect to compete soon for championships. Our Board of Regents and 12th Man fans are to be commended for devoting resources to facilities and now to the coaching staff to do just that. Beat the Hell Out of Everybody!"

As the old saying goes, they were willing to "put their money where their mouth is" and gave the coach a fully guaranteed, 10-year, \$75 million contract. The athletic department noted that no state-appropriated funds would be used to pay the coach's salary.

Fisher became the head coach of Florida State in 2010 after the retirement of football legend Bobby Bowden. Over the last eight years, he has averaged 10 wins a season. He compiled an overall record of 83-23 and a conference record of 48-16. Jimbo has led his teams to three ACC Championships, four division titles and the 2013 National Championship.

Jimbo has plenty of experience in the SEC after being an assistant at Auburn for six years and LSU for seven. His record as a head coach versus SEC opponents is 9-2. His teams have been 5-2 in Bowl

games including 3 wins in Traditional New Year's Day games.

Known as a quarterback guru, the West Virginia native played the position in college and has been the quarterback coach or offensive coordinator for much of his career.

After arriving on campus, Fisher was able to address the team and tour the facilities. He wasted no time in reaching out to current verbal commits and introducing himself to Texas coaches and potential recruits.

He was able to have sit down meetings with the current staff and as the coaches took the reins of the team through the Bowl game preparation, he was able to assemble his new staff.

The Aggies' new offensive coordinator is Darrell Dickey. He is no stranger to Aggieland as he started his coaching career as a graduate assistant at A&M in 1985. He arrives to College Station after five seasons as the offensive coordinator at the University of Memphis. Over the last four seasons, Dickey was a member of the Tigers coaching staff that led the program to a 37-14 record, four-straight bowl appearances, a conference championship and two divisional titles. Over a 30-plus year coaching career, Dickey has served as the offensive coordinator at seven Football Bowl Subdivision schools, in addition to a six-year stint as the head coach of the University of North Texas.

One of the two coaches that Fisher

retained is offensive line coach Jim Turner. This will be the third head coach that Turner has worked under at A&M (Sherman and Sumlin). A veteran of more than 20 seasons of coaching experience at all levels of football, Turner has developed multiple NFL offensive linemen at Texas A&M including NFL first-round selections Luke Joeckel, Jake Matthews and Cedric Ogbuehi.

Coach Fisher brought three coaches with him from Florida State. A record-setting quarterback during his playing days at Auburn, Dameyune Craig will coach the wide receivers. He coached the last three years at Florida State helping Jimbo with his offense as well as coordinating the FSU recruiting efforts that landed a No. 1 and No. 2 class. He also had coaching stints at SEC schools LSU and Auburn.

The Aggies new running backs coach is Jay Graham who was a record setting running back for the Tennessee Volunteers. Jay went on to play five years in the NFL before starting his coaching career as a graduate assistant back at Tennessee. During his coaching career, he served as the running backs coach at South Carolina and a second stint at Tennessee before moving to Florida State last season.

One of the biggest differences in Fisher's coaching approach is the use of the tight-end. Tim Brewster joins Jimbo from FSU and will be in charge of this unit. He will also take on the job of recruiting coordinator for the Aggies. Brewster brings a wealth of knowledge having coached for over 30 years. He was a two-time All-Big Ten tight end as a player at the University of Illinois.

He spent the last five years on Fisher's staff at FSU. He was the Head Coach of Minnesota from 2007-2010. He has been an NFL assistant coach for five seasons and an assistant coach at five different "Power 5" schools.

On the other side of the ball, Jimbo was able to snag one of the brightest rising stars in the nation in Defensive Coordinator Mike Elko. He just wrapped up his first season as DC for the Fighting Irish. Before that, he gave Fisher fits as the DC of the Wake Forrest Demon Deacons. A multi sport athlete in high school, including quarterback, he played safety at Penn before beginning his coaching career. He will also be responsible for Texas A&M safeties.

Terry Price will return as the Aggies' defensive ends coach. Price is Aggie Football. A four-year football letterman at Texas A&M from 1986-1989, Price led the Aggies' defensive line in tackles as both a junior and a senior while helping the Aggies to pair of conference championships during his standout career. Price earned All-Southwest Conference honors as a senior and was also named an honorable mention All-American by The Sporting News. He brings 25 plus years of coaching experience including stints at SEC foes Auburn and Ole Miss. He has coached several NFL players including the number one pick of the 2017 NFL Draft Myles Garrett.

Handling duties as our linebackers coach is Bradley Dale Paveto, who brings over 30 years of coaching experience to A&M. Paveto played defensive back for SMU before starting his coaching career in 1987. He brings a wealth

of experience having coached at four different SEC schools: Arkansas, LSU, Kentucky and Ole Miss. In addition to coaching our linebackers, Bradley will be a big contributor for our special teams units.

Maurice Linguist will coach Texas A&M's defensive backs. He returns to the state of Texas from Minnesota where he was recently promoted to assistant head coach. Linguist was a safety at Baylor from 2003-2006. His gopher secondary squad finished the season No. 11 in the nation in passing yards per game. Maurice also brings SEC experience having coached safeties at Mississippi State in 2016.

In what might possibly be the biggest steal for Coach Fisher, the new strength and conditioning coach is Jerry Schmidt. The 55-year-old Nebraska native is one of the most respected S&C coaches in the country. He has been with Oklahoma for the last 18 years. He also had prior stints with Florida, Notre Dame and Oklahoma State. He has coached six Heisman Trophy winners and has been a part of three national championship teams. His slogan is, "Hard Work Beats Talent When Talent Doesn't Work Hard!"

When the word first got out that Jimbo Fisher might be coming to A&M the scoffers said, "Why would he leave Florida State for Texas A&M?" Based on everything that Coach Fisher has said, he believes that A&M Football is a sleeping giant and he has assembled a staff to wake that giant up and raise the program to the top. He has the championship vision and the support of Aggie Athletics and the 12th Man to make that happen.



REWIND [GAME 11: **A&M 31**, OLE MISS 24]



▲ PHOTOS OF THE GAME



Texas A&M came into Oxford with revenge on their minds as the Rebels had won three in a row against the Aggies, including last year's heartbreaking loss. The first half of the game was a seesaw battle as the two teams traded touchdowns. Right before the half, Mississippi kicked a go-ahead field goal that gave them the lead 24-21. In the second half, the Aggie defense played outstanding, allowing only 66 total yards. Derrick Tucker had the game changing play of the night when he intercepted Jordan Ta'amu and ran it back 19 yards for the go ahead touchdown. The defense would not relinquish another score and LaCamera added a field goal late in the game for the final tally. Nick Starkel threw for 272 yards reigniting the Aggie offense. Ratley caught five passes for 111 yards and a touchdown.

[GAME 12: LSU 45, A&M 21]



▲ PHOTOS OF THE GAME



In the final game of the regular season the Tigers jumped on the Aggies early and took a 20-0 lead. But the Aggies battled back and with five minutes left in the third only trailed by six points. Unfortunately, Danny Etling had his best game as a Tiger and carved up the Aggie defense with 347 yards passing and three touchdowns. LSU added another 255 yards on the ground while the Ags could only manage 55 yards. Texas A&M had four turnovers, a fumble and three interceptions. One of the lone bright spots was Christian Kirk who caught seven passes for 78 yards including a 10-yard catch for a touchdown. This wound up being the final game of the Kevin Sumlin era.



[GAME 13: **WAKE FOREST 55**, A&M 52]

BELK BOWL



The Aggies got out to a great start vs. Wake Forest as they blocked two punts in the first five minutes. The first was scooped up by Oliver in the end zone and the second led to a short drive and a touchdown run by Williams which gave the Aggies a 14-0 lead. But, the Demon Deacons caught fire and scored 31 unanswered points and looked to run away with the victory. The Aggies battled back thanks to the record-breaking performance by Nick Starkel who threw for 499 yards and four touchdowns. Christian Kirk had one of his best games as an Aggie, managing 13 catches for 189 yards and three touchdowns. The Aggies regained the lead late in the game but the defense couldn't hold Wake Forest as they marched down the field for the final score. The Aggies had one last chance but came up short and the Deacons won 55-52.





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Lacrosse Club

BY ROB HAVENS '88

Covering Texas A&M Sport Clubs has allowed me to hear first-hand from the presidents of each team about their fulfilling experiences as leaders of their organizations. For this story, I have a unique perspective because my son, Tyler Havens, joined the Texas A&M Men's Lacrosse Club last year.

According to club president Drew Johnson, "Most of our members have previous experience, but usually, we have three or four guys new to the sport come out each year with skills from sports like baseball, basketball, and football, which transition over quite well."

Tyler was one of these players. Though he had never played the sport before, he has been an all-around athlete all of his life. He was welcomed to the team with open arms, and it has been an amazing experience for him. "For someone who had never played, it was intimidating at first, but the coaches and my teammates

have been amazing in helping me to become a better player," Tyler explained.

"Lacrosse is very similar to the philosophies and rules of both hockey and basketball, with more emphasis on hockey," said Johnson.

Ten players are on the field at time, including three defenders, three midfielders, three attackmen, and one goalie. Defenders are tasked with guarding the opposing team's attackmen; midfielders play both offense and defense; attackmen are offensive specialists; and the goalie is tasked with defending a 6-foot by 6-foot goal. The game is played on a field slightly shorter, but wider, than a football field with a ball similar to the size of a baseball. A game has four quarters, and the team with the most goals at the end of the game wins. "The major quirk of the sport is the stick, or lacrosse, each player wields and uses to handle the ball," Johnson explained.

The Texas A&M Men's Lacrosse Club is the first collegiate lacrosse team established in the state of Texas. This year's squad went undefeated in the fall and looks to make waves versus the likes of LSU, Florida, and Florida State this spring. "We also do happen to play t.u.

in Austin on Super Bowl Sunday, which should have major playoff implications," Johnson said.

When asked about his favorite thing about the club, Johnson said, "The guys you meet on the team. We are constantly doing things outside of playing, whether it is pulling tickets for football games, taking classes together, or just hanging out on weekends or over the summer. As for being president of the club, I enjoy the managerial experience. I hope to carry what I have learned and will continue to learn in my time as team president beyond my college years."



Trap & Skeet Club

BY ROB HAVENS '88

In many sports, the margin of error can be pretty large and the participant can still be considered incredible. A baseball player that has a .333 batting average fails two out of three times at the plate but is considered one of the best hitters on the team. A quarterback that completes sixty percent of his passes is considered outstanding, although over a third of his passes are incomplete. On the shooting range, the best can be separated by one or two shots out of one hundred.

A great shooter must have sound fundamentals, emotional poise, and, most importantly, mental toughness. "About ninety percent of shooting is mental," said Texas A&M Trap and Skeet Club president Vidal Cantu. "Many times, you are shooting at very similar targets one hundred times in a row. In events like these, it is necessary to score a perfect 100 to even have a chance at placing. The mental toughness needed to stay completely focused for an event, and often for a whole weekend, is imperative in order to be a great shooter."

The club competes in six different disciplines: American Skeet, American Trap, Sporting Clays, 5-Stand, International Skeet, and Modified Trap. Each discipline has its own set of rules and target presentations. At the national tournament, the Aggies participate in all six events over the course of four days. The team won the ACUI Division II National Championship in both 2015 and 2016. Last year, the club decided



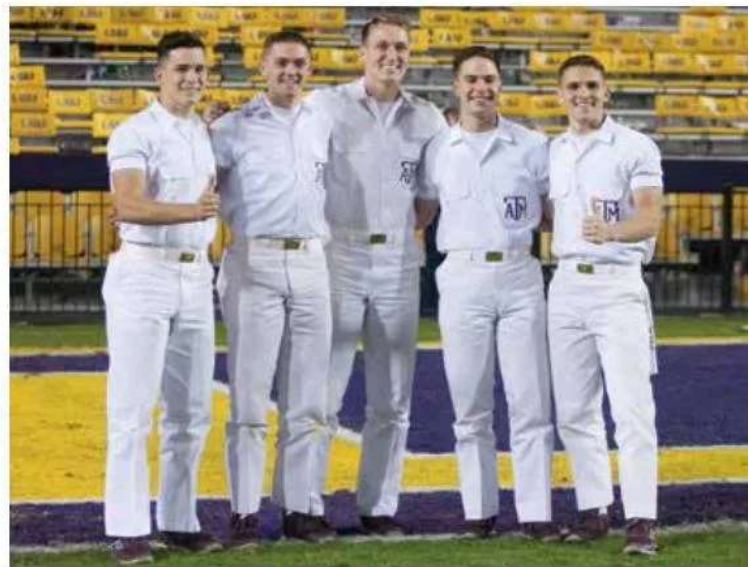
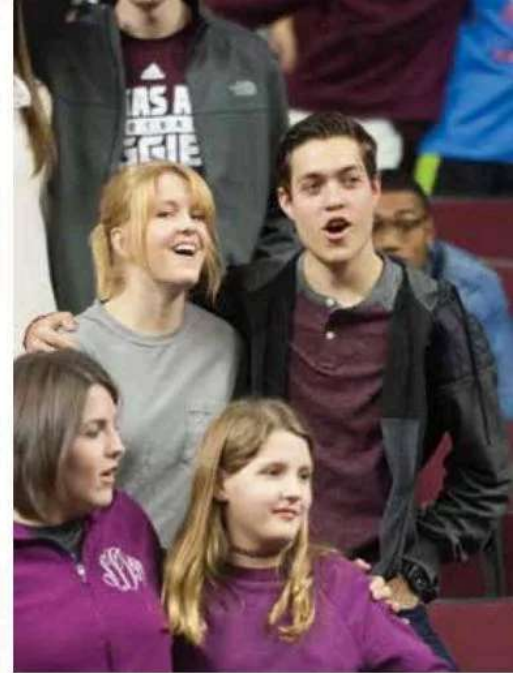
to make the jump up to Division I and wound up taking second place out of the best teams in the country. The team is hungry to add a national championship at the Division I level.

Currently, the team has eighty general club members and takes twenty-five to Nationals. Most members join the club with previous experience, but the club encourages anyone who is interested in learning about the sport to join.

The team practices twice a week at the Brazos Valley 4H facilities in Snook, Texas. As the team prepares for Regionals and Nationals, they open more practice days for the club shooters.

"My favorite thing about being a part of this team is definitely the people," Cantu said. "Since my freshman year, I have been able to meet incredible people that I know will be lifelong friends. Being able to practice and compete alongside these great Aggies year in and year out is truly a blessing."

Visit recsports.tamu.edu for more info about Texas A&M Sport Clubs.





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